

## Officials test for radiation at Mt. Kisco lumberyard

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Staff Writer

State health officials are testing samples from a former radiation collection site in Mount Kisco in response to concerns from workers at a lumberyard that now occupies the property.

The site, a 1-acre piece of village property on Kisco Avenue used as a storage area, was the subject of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report last year. The report said harmful levels of radiation might remain in the soil that could be breathed as dust or leach into the ground and surface water.

A state Health Department official said yesterday that concerns expressed by employees of the Richards Home and Lumber Co. prompted an inspection last week to determine whether the site was hazardous to them.

"We're in the process of gathering information," said Dr. Karim Rimawi, director of the Health Department's Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection. "We're not characterizing the site; that's up to the EPA to do. But in order to talk to the workers and their families, we

want to know what sort of hazards they may be facing."

Rimawi said air samples were taken to see whether there were hazardous levels of radiation in the dust. According to a 1988 inspection by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the soil is contaminated by radiation at a higher-than-average level but is not harmful.

Health investigators from the state and county were at the site Thursday. Besides the air samples, they took gamma ray measurements and left radon detectors there.

Rimawi expected the analysis of the samples and measurements would be completed in the next few weeks, after which the results would be presented to the lumberyard's workers.

"Based on the initial measurements taken, we don't expect any imminent danger," Rimawi said.

Paul Carozza, one of the owners of Richards, said he was not too worried about health dangers.

"I've been here for 12 years," he said. "There are more things in the world that will kill you than this."

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